

Instructional Strategies Online

April 17, 2012

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What is Guided Reading?

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Guided reading is a strategy that helps students become good readers. The teacher provides support for small groups of readers as they learn to use various reading strategies (context clues, letter and sound relationships, word structure, and so forth). Although guided reading has been traditionally associated with primary grades it can be modified and used successfully in all grade levels. For example, older students may need to learn new strategies to understand how to read an information book in a way that is going to give them access to the information they are seeking.

"In primary grades children are learning to read and in upper grades they are reading to learn." Anonymous

What is its purpose?

When the proper books are selected, students are able to read with approximately 90% accuracy. This enables the students to enjoy the story because there is not an overwhelming amount of "road blocks" that interfere with comprehension. Students focus on the meaning of the story and application of various reading strategies to problem solve when they do hit a road block in their knowledge or reading ability. By providing small groups of students the opportunity to learn various reading strategies with guidance from the teacher, they will possess the skills and knowledge required to read increasingly more difficult texts on their own. Independent reading is the GOAL - guided reading provides the framework to ensure that students are able to apply strategies to make meaning from print.

How do I do it?

Although the approach to guided reading is going to depend somewhat on your class size and grade level, the following suggestions can be used to provide an initial framework.

1. Students should be divided into small groups (4-6 students). The younger the students the smaller the groups. ([Learn more about grouping students](#)).
2. Guided reading lessons are to be about 15-20 minutes in duration.
3. Appropriately leveled reading materials must be selected for the group and each child should have his/her own copy of the literature. [Learn more about reading levels/leveled materials.](#)
4. Pre-Reading: The teacher establishes a purpose for reading through prediction making, vocabulary introduction, or discussing ideas that will provide the readers with the background knowledge required for the text.
5. Reading: The teacher observes the students as they read the text softly or silently to themselves. The teacher provides guidance and coaching to individuals based on her/his observations by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
6. Post Reading: The teacher asks questions to ensure that the text has been comprehended by the readers and praises their

efforts. Further, the teacher may observe gaps in strategy application and address these gaps following the reading in a mini-lesson format.

7. [What do all the other students do during the guided reading lesson?](#) When you teach guided reading you are busy observing and instructing a small group of students. The other students in your class must be kept engaged in a literacy activity while you are with your GR group. *To ensure success of guided reading, be prepared to invest time upfront teaching your students the procedures you would like them to follow while you are busy with the GR groups. Once you are certain that the students can follow the procedures THEN focus on actually teaching guided reading.*
 - o View a [list of possible literacy centers](#) you can use to engage your "other" students in while you spend your time with a GR group.

How can I adapt it?

There are many ways to adapt guided reading to meet the needs of specific learners. Leveled reading materials, personalized spelling lists, multilevel literacy centers, and opportunities for independent projects all contribute to making the program fairly adaptable.

- Tips for adapting:
 - o select one grade-level text and one easier than grade level to read each week so that your weaker students have the opportunity to read with greater ease & confidence
 - o consider alternative grouping (interest, social, ability)
 - o encourage rereading of selections to increase fluency each time selection is read
 - o use reading partners, parent volunteers, and care partners to support the struggling readers and challenge the strong readers
 - o encourage reading time to provide more practice time
 - o establish a parent volunteer reading program (study buddy)

Assessment & Evaluation Considerations

To ensure students are grouped and regrouped in the proper instructional groups ongoing observation and assessment is essential.

- [Four Blocks](#) - Assessment
- Downloads - [assessment rubrics](#) for reading, spelling, narrative text and more.

Teacher Resources

If you are interested in implementing guided reading into your classroom, please view our [teacher resources page](#) for more in-depth information on the guided reading approach. This page also contains links to valuable Web sites and teacher resources.